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On the Bibliography of the Spanish Comedia.

By

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Although various scholars of today have made most valuable contributions¹⁾ to the bibliography of the Spanish comedia, nevertheless, the vastness of the field still to be covered leaves the largest part of the work undone. How great, indeed, not to say insurmountable, is the task of making an adequate bibliography of the dramatic art of Spain during the siglo de oro, became manifest to me during a recent visit made to most of the important public Spanish libraries in Europe²⁾.

1) Among the more prominent, outside of the Spanish Peninsula, mention may be made of Vollmöller, Morel-Fatio, Stiefel, Restori and Rennert, but their articles are scattered in so many publications, that it is by no means an easy task to collect them all. Bibliographers may possibly deem it wiser in the future to have less recourse to the older printed material, especially lists or catalogues, notably where they do not mention the whereabouts of a comedia. It is of little value to swell the number of titles of plays or volumes which no longer exist, and a good rule would be to deal only with the material which has come down to us.

2) Although I visited the chief libraries of Spanish America, I found practically nothing except some autos by Calderón. Comedias probably did not fit into the life of the early conquistadores, and when the state of the new colonies had become more settled, the vogue of the older comedia had passed. Cf. my article in Mod. Lan. Notes, May, 1905. In view of the absence of comedias in South American libraries, Lope de Vega's warning a los que leen mis escritos con afición (que algunos hay, si no en mi patria, en Italia y Francia y en las Indias, donde no se atrevió a pasar la envidia) (prólogo to the Peregrino) sounds like an idle boast. And what has become of the plays mentioned by Vera Tassis in the prologue to the 5th part of Calderón's comedias (1682): quantas (comedias) se imprimen en Sevilla para passar a las Indias, las gradúan con el nombre de D. Pedro (Calderón)? Cf. also D. Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y Mendoza, por D. L. Fernández-Guerra y Orbe, Madrid 1871, 1^{ra} Parte, Cap. xvii.

After examining, with all the care which a limited time allowed, the mass of comedias in manuscript as well as in printed form, I reached the following conclusions which I trust can be made clear in these few pages. In the first place, it never will be possible for anyone single-handed to overcome successfully all the difficulties by which the monstrous task of writing a complete bibliography of the Spanish comedia is surrounded. It is not alone a matter of classifying and introducing order into a chaotic field of unlimited dimensions; it is a question of treating with an equal circumspection following a plan determined beforehand the material which is scattered over Europe in both public and private libraries. To compass this end, it would be advisable for a small number of scholars interested in the literature of the Peninsula to coöperate, to survey the field and to allot a portion of it to each, before entering upon the study of manuscripts and editions together with the score of questions which the subject presents. But harmony of method among the various bibliographers is indispensable, lest the innumerable discrepancies already in print be multiplied. In the second place, the ground must first be cleared of all valueless encumbrances, if the material is to be successfully attacked. The process of total elimination of a portion of what remains of the comedia may meet with some opposition, but I feel convinced that no progress can be made before a fairly large number of comedias, manuscript as well as printed sueltas, are weeded out¹). In the third place, no bibliography can ever hope to be final or irrefutable in all of its details. A number of enigmas confront one at every turn; the many lacunae

1) Restori appears to oppose the omission of any suelta whatsoever. Si contestò l'utilità del costante riferire le indicazioni tipografiche delle tante sueltas che ho esaminato; sueltas che, salvo le eccezioni, non hanno che un valore relativo. Io penso che nel mare magnum della bibliografia drammatica spagnuola ogni minuzia giovi etc. *Studj di Fil. Rom.* VI, 1893, p. 155. An examination of the texts of some of the sueltas which I have seen would convince Restori of their utter worthlessness. Among the many thousands which may be seen in Madrid (Bibl. nac. and Bibl. munic.), Berlin (Kl. Bibl.), London (Brit. Mus.), Parma (Bibl. Pal.), and Vienna (Kk. Hofbibl.) — not to mention others — there are scores which commend themselves by no single feature; and this refers to both Mss. and printed sueltas. Their condition is a deplorable one; the author may be unknown, the text undated, unauthoritative and unintelligible on account of mutilations. While there is so much worthier material to be examined in connection with known playwrights, it will be hard to find scholarship and patience united and willing to be sacrificed on material which does not bid fair to repay the labor required.

which must exist in its compilation will, it can be safely prophesied, never be filled out, though it is to be hoped that many a desired volume, now unknown or inaccessible, will get into the hands of scholars in the course of years, possibly when some private libraries in England and Spain which are now closed to those who are really interested, will admit the wandering student to their treasures. Such difficulties face every bibliographer, however, and should not deter lovers of the great literature of Spain from making the necessary beginning.

The question which naturally arises first is that of a history and classification of the manuscripts. Even a slight acquaintance with those which one finds in the large libraries would make it evident that their career has been a chequered one. The majority of the truly valuable ones, that is, those dating from the first third of the seventeenth century, resembles a battered remnant which has survived some great upheaval; while the later ones, chiefly copies, though found in greater abundance, show equally hard usage. But not only does their appearance furnish a clue to their history; this can frequently be completed from ample testimony to be gleaned from various sources. It appears, at the outset, to have been a custom extremely common among practically all writers to endanger the existence of a manuscript by entrusting it immediately after its composition to some friend. When the work chanced to excite a wide-spread interest, copies were quickly made, and the contents of many a noted book thus became known considerably before its official publication. Only a few examples from among the works of some of the most noted men of the century would convince one of this fact¹). The privilege of reading a treatise or novel still in the handwriting of the author was of course abused at times, and the complaints which have come down to us concerning the

1) In his prologue al curioso lector, (Guzman de Alfarache, parte 2a) Aleman says: por haber sido pródigo comunicando mis papeles y pensamientos, me los cogieron al vuelo, de que viendome (si decir se puede) robado y defraudado, fuè necesario volver de nuevo al trabajo etc. The first part of Don Quixote was apparently well known before it was printed (cf. Barrera, Nueva Biog. de Lope de Vega, p. 121); and the 2nd part by Avellaneda also indicates an acquaintance with the real 2nd part by Cervantes. Quevedo states in the prologue to his sueños (a los que han leído y leyeren) edit. of 1629: Tuve facilidad en dar traslados a los amigos; . . . cuando por la ganancia que se prometieron . . . algunos mercaderes extranjeros las pusieron en la publicidad de la imprenta. . . . Y porque no padezcan las demasías del hurto que han padecido los demás papeles, saco de nuevo etc., all of which shows how freely Mss. were circulated before they were printed.

free use which was made by literary competitors of manuscripts in circulation, throw an interesting light upon the history of many Spanish books. But if manuscripts in general were thus handed over to the tender mercies of the author's friends and enemies alike, none among them were manifestly subject to greater vicissitudes than those of the playwright. To follow a manuscript after it leaves his hand, is to pursue it through a maze intricate with bibliographical difficulties. These consist, on the one hand, in a study of originals and hastily made copies, both of which have been subjected to extended wanderings over the Peninsula; on the other hand, in questions of original authorship, cases of plagiarism together with accusations and recriminations on the part of writers, stage managers, printers and booksellers.

This state of affairs is more or less logical, if the history of the theatre is taken into account. By 1600 the playhouse had become the chief source of public amusement and there was an ever-growing demand for comedias in all of the important cities of Spain. But it did not take the stage-managers long to recognize the fact that in order to maintain the popularity of their performances or to swell their audiences, it was necessary to offer the public a large variety. Therefore new plays were constantly much desired. The demand, no matter how great, was always met by the innumerable crowd of poetasters which had sprung up; and plays must, as a general thing, have gone directly from the writer to the stage-manager to be treated thenceforward as common property. It is not conceivable that any copy was as a rule kept by the author¹). After the licence to act a play had been duly obtained²), the latter had to be copied for the actors, in which process cutting, condensing and substitution began in order to adapt certain scenes to the stage. This is manifest in most manuscripts. But the life of a comedia³) was short and it is probable that only a few enjoyed sufficient popularity to warrant a recurring series of presentations. The manuscripts of a play which had run its course were consequently held in little esteem, and were subject thereafter

1) Cf. Lope's view: no ha de andar el poeta guardandolas (comedias), y mas quien les da (á los autores) su mismo original, y en su vida guardó traslado. Prologo al lector, 17th part of his collection, 1621.

2) It was probably no difficult matter to obtain some kind of official permit to act a play. cf. Schack, *Gesch. d. dram. Lit. u. Kunst in Span.* II, 135f.

3) In a letter of Sept. 4th, 1633 (see Barrera, *Nueva Biog.* p. 651) Lope seems to imply that a fortnight was a long time for the reproduction of one of his plays. An earlier statement (Prol. 11th part, 1618) about comedias which were heard *setenta veces*, must have been applicable to very few.

to one of two fates. They either remained among the repertory of the first company and accompanied its wanderings from city to city, or they got by dubious channels into the hands of other stage-managers¹⁾ to be performed where the play was unknown; or they were bought by some bookseller who was anxious to throw upon the market a venture almost certain to bring highly profitable returns. Owing to the increasing popularity of the comedia, large sales of the latter in a printed form were assured. The wanderings of a manuscript, whether in autograph or mere copy, may frequently be learned from the *licencia* which, when granted by the township²⁾ where the company had baled to act, was duly recorded upon the last leaves of the play. Once out in the world in this unprotected condition, the remaining history of a manuscript can be readily inferred. Most writers have left us bitter complaints regarding the treatment which their works received, and it was a foregone conclusion, that, whenever a comedia which had fallen into the hands of an unscrupulous company of actors and cheap poetasters, which had been mutilated as well as furbished up with foreign matter, returned to the original author, he must have been a wise father who recognized his own child³⁾. The number of comedias which never survived these peregrinations with all their wear and tear was undoubtedly very large. Whether it became impossible thereafter for a writer to acknowledge the authorship of a

1) Cf. prologo al lector, 17th part of Lope's collection.

2) Some of the censuras or licencias show that Mss. drifted from one Spanish province into another, and even into Portugal. cf. for ex. Gayangos, Catal. of the Mss. in the Span. lan. in the Brit. Mus. vol. I, pp. 90, 91: and Paz y Melia, Catal. de las piezas de Teatro etc. de la Bibl. Nac. Madrid, 1899); Barrera, Nueva Biog., p. 115, n. l. In his *Persiles y Sigismunda*, lib. III, cap. 2, Cervantes gives an account of a company of actors who obtain *licencia* to act from the corregidor.

3) Cf. the valuable testimony in the prologo, 13th part of Lope's collection, 1620; el teatro a los lectores in the 15th part, 1621; the prologo, 17th part, 1621; and prologo, 21st part, 1635. Even more worthy of consideration is a passage from a letter by Lope to the Duque de Sessa when he had heard that the latter was collecting his Mss.: (1611) No sé si es sobra de tiempo ó falta de gusto juntar V. ex^a estos papeles que me escribe; pero de cualquier suerte que fueran, ya que ygnorancias mias, en su original por lo menos, porque aunque tengan los nombres no serán las mismas, pues de partos y adulterios ya no tendrán la primera forma que les di en sus principios. Barrera, Nueva Biog. p. 172. Cf. also vol. IV of Lope's comedias in the Bibl. de Aut. Esp. p. xxi. Quevedo in his *Buscon*, lib. II, cap. 9, speaks of the patchwork of current comedias.

play because he failed to recognize it in its garbled form, or because of personal pride, is hard to say. Nevertheless the custom of attributing a comedia to an author „who never imagined such a thing in all his life“, or to some ingenio de esta corte, resulted directly from the treatment described. But the most deplorable consequence of the vicissitudes to which manuscripts were subjected was their arrival in great numbers on the bookseller's stalls where they were exposed to public sale¹); from the latter place — and in what must have been a scarcely legible condition, if some extant manuscripts are a criterion — they could get into print without any difficulty. When a printer had issued a consignment of plays, his original copy was no doubt destroyed.

Of the history of manuscripts a single writer of whom we know more than of any other of his day, Lope de Vega, can give the best account. The various manuscripts of his own plays answer numerous questions which the bibliographer will ask, and occasional passages from his printed works or his correspondence help in solving many a puzzle. As regards the career of the comedia after it left the author's hands, his testimony bears out what has been said above. It shows especially that the rights of the author, stage-manager and bookseller were either not very clearly defined, or, if so, only in theory, and not sufficiently protected in practice. It may be said with certainty that Lope did not become aware of the value of his own manuscripts until an extraordinary popularity brought it home to him and suggested the preservation of his comedias through the press. In this he was naturally forestalled by the appearance of unauthorized editions which brought from him many expressions of profound disapproval²). But in all this he himself was much to blame and no better than those of whose negligence he complained (Prol. 17th part of coll.), for it was not until pressure was brought to bear upon him by his friends, chiefly the Duke of Sessa³), that he collected his available autograph come-

1) Cf. Prologo del teatro á los lectores, 11th part of Lope's collection, 1618, and prol. al lector, 17th part, 1621. No doubt comedias were sold on the street in scraps and bundles much after the fashion of those in which Cervantes pretends to have come across the original of Don Quixote, sold to him for half a real. Cf. Don Quix. pt. I, cap. 9.

2) It will probably never be known with certainty whether Lope had any share whatsoever in those volumes of his collection which appeared before part nine, and which he repudiates as unauthorized in spite of the fact that they claim occasionally to have been printed from original Mss. Cf. for ex. the prologo á los lectores, 4th part, 1614.

3) Cf. Rennert, Life of Lope de Vega, p. 198; Barrera, Nueva Biog. pp. 172, 281, 486, 516. If, as it appears there, speculators in the book-trade

dias and instituted a search for those which had become scattered. Many of them, however, must have been handed over to stage-managers immediately¹⁾ after completion and consequently become an absolute loss within a short time²⁾.

If, therefore, we bear in mind the treatment which the innumerable stage-productions received at the outset, the condition of the manuscripts today will be better understood. An attempt to classify them, to establish possible relations should be the first task of a comprehensive bibliography. A practical subdivision of the manuscripts into the following classes might be made: (a) unquestioned autographs³⁾; (b) doubtful autographs about the handwriting of which there can be no certainty. This class is recruited chiefly from those manuscripts which have survived the wear and tear of their careers in fragments not sufficient to identify them. (c) Copies contemporary with the author, which are, to be sure, hard to distinguish at times from (b), the doubtful autographs, especially in the case of writers of whom little is known. But copies are as a rule characterized by a clearer hand, or not infrequently bear indications of service in some theatre. Their value can often be determined by a comparison with other copies or editions. As regards the noted playwrights of the first half of the 17th century it would be advisable to make a fourth class (d) of those manuscripts of which it can be asserted that, while not contemporary, they are still of the same century. Such a class, made for deserving copies,

were attempting to get possession of some of Lope's Mss. in an underhand way, the latter must have become a rare object as early as 1617.

1) Cf. the assertion: *mas de ciento (comedias), en horas veinticuatro, pasaron de las musas al teatro. Egloga á Claudio, 1631.*

2) As regards the deliberate destruction of comedias by the opponents of the theatre, the subject has hardly been treated at all. There always existed in certain quarters an influential opposition to the stage, a kind of concealed movement which received sporadic expression, however, from the earliest times through the eighteenth century. Some Vol. misc. (*Varia hisp. de comoediis 1715—90*) in the Royal Libr. at Berlin contain the more recent attacks on the theatre. A history of this opposition remains to be written.

3) Unfortunately, even about supposedly genuine autographs, differences of opinion may exist. Thus Chorley said of *Lo que ha de ser*, „the original Ms. is one of the treasures of the Brit. Mus.“ *Fras. Mag.* for July, 1859, vol. 60, p. 68. Barrera, *Catal.* p. 434 calls the play *autografa*; so does Schack, *Nachträge*, p. 48. Yet Rennert, *Life of Lope de Vega*, p. 311, n. 2, on the authority of Fitzmaurice-Kelly, calls it a copy. Moreover, it seems possible that two autographs of the same play should exist. On the comedia, *El principe despeñado* cf. Restori, *ZfRPh.* vol. 26, 1902, p. 507.

may, through the aid of careful collation, establish the proper sequence of manuscripts of which the age and order would otherwise have to be left undecided. Last, the largest class, (e), embraces manuscripts of the 18th century. They are for the most part prompters' books or actors' copies which have survived by the thousands. Some are to be found in miscellaneous volumes bound together with printed sueltas; others are unbound and still tied in bundles or legajos, as they were when stored away in the theatres. The value of very many of these is, at best, extremely slight. A careful examination shows them to be cheap lucubrations, a patchwork perpetrated either by some actor or poor hack who lived by furbishing up the copy of an old play entrusted to him¹). It is of course possible that in some one of these miscellaneous volumes or in the legajos a valuable manuscript of some lost play, concealed perhaps under a strange title, may be found. I, for my part, am not very sanguine of any such result. Some of the copies of the worthier comedias may at best serve to reestablish the original reading of a corrupted portion of a text. But this will entail an expenditure of much time and patience, with the results in inverse proportion.

The history of printed comedias and the condition of those which remain form a parallel to the above account of the vicissitudes which characterized the career of the manuscripts. In view of the fact that many thousands of printed comedias are still extant, the vast majority of which are sueltas without any authority for the constitution of a text, a bibliography must begin by a very careful selection of that which recommends itself for purposes of collation. As regards the volumes of printed collections, whether they were authorized publications or not, the questions still to be decided are those of priority and authority of text as well as their relation to one another and to the manuscripts. To do this effectively, the strange relations which appear to have existed among authors, booksellers and printers — notably among the latter, and not only in Spain, but in Italy and the Low Countries — must be carefully studied.

The great demand for printed plays, which appears to have arisen at the beginning of the 17th century, to swell thereafter into enormous

1) Cf. Schack, II, 146; Cervantes, *Pers. y Sigis.*, III, cap. 2, p. 625, edit. in *Bibl. de Aut. Esp.: un poeta . . . de propósito con los recitantes venia, así para enmendar y remendar comedias viejas, como para hacerlas de nuevo*; also Vélez de Guevara, *Diablo Cojuelo*, tranco iv, for a burlesque on the practices of the contemporary playwright.

proportions, has been accounted for by the popularity of the comedia and by the fact that copies in manuscript were not long lived nor sufficient to answer the demand. Consequently the annoyances to which playwrights were already subjected by stage-managers because of the garbled versions of their plays produced upon the stage, were greatly increased when printed versions made their appearance. Almost every writer has testified to the wretched customs which obtained among the booksellers whose methods were sure to make a single volume as imperfect an issue as possible¹). In the first place, doubt may be entertained as to the place of publication and the real editor of some volumes. Books were thrown on the market with such haste that all conditions militated against the issue of a good text. The manuscript, after reaching the printer in some roundabout way, could not have been in any state very favorable to a clean redaction. With innumerable cuts and insertions — as examples still show — with whole pages or scenes missing, a manuscript could look forward to no remedy of its ailments at the hands of an editor who was anxious to have done with the matter at the earliest date and with the least care and expense. The printer set up what he could read and omitted what he failed to decipher. The printed form therefore added to the flaws already in the manuscript, misprints, chance punctuation, cheap paper and bad ink. This slovenliness contributed more than anything else to the mediocre character of the average Spanish comedia. Under the circumstances, the frequently repeated complaint of playwrights, that certain plays issued under their name were utterly unknown to them, must make anyone who examines many volumes of comedias suspicious about the authorship of some of them. Garbled or cheap texts yield almost nothing, as a consequence, and the bibliographer's only hope lies in the fact that training and custom may quickly reveal what texts must be discarded and which reserved for collation and correction.

A classification of all comedias printed up to 1800 is a task which above all others would appal the bibliographer who dared approach the subject singlehanded. The field may be divided first into two general heads, (I) comedias printed originally in some collection, in volume form, and (II) comedias printed as sueltas. The latter have been frequently gathered and bound together without rhyme or reason, but such volumes of miscellaneous contents nevertheless belong

1) Their complaints, so frequently expressed, may be found in the prologues or dedications of their works. In addition to Lope's prologues, see also his *Epistola á Gaspar de Barrionuevo*, and Schack, II, 148 & 321.

to the second large group. The first subdivision of the collections would consist of (a) authorized editions of comedias by a single writer, and would embrace such works as Parts nine to twenty-two inclusive of Lope's collection, the two volumes by Alarcon, the second of Guillen de Castro and other similar collections. Critical editions of all these are an impossibility before a comprehensive and systematic bibliography of the comedia has been attempted¹). The next subdivision (b) would include unauthorized collections of a single author. This class may occasionally be of use in collating or correcting texts, but in those cases in which it contains the only known form in which a play has survived, it must be approached with circumspection. For, while on the one hand unintelligible passages are generally past all remedy when there is but one reading to go by, on the other hand, the risk must be avoided of attributing to a certain playwright a comedia which may belong to the number of those which he repudiated as spurious. A third subdivision (c) would contain the mixed collections of various authors, including those volumes of which the title bears but one name, while the contents are from different pens. This classification can be more easily carried out, if the idea of a definite sequence and relation in the volumes of collected comedias is abandoned. With the exception of parts nine to twenty-two inclusive of Lope's collection and most of the series of the comedias escogidas (1652—1704), such attempts, as for example that of Münch-Bellinghausen, to hit upon a neat arrangement according to which the various volumes of plays issued between 1600 and 1650 form a definite sequence, is but so much labor wasted²). The class (c) would resemble

1) The drawbacks of Barrera's extraordinary catalogue, which will be felt chiefly in the future, are the statements based on hearsay and unreliable records, and the mention of volumes and titles of plays which no one has ever seen. Such a bibliography cannot be undertaken without a large number of systematic Vorarbeiten. It is to be greatly regretted that the Academy did not put off the publication of Lope's works, since no edition can be made definitive at the present stage of the bibliography of the comedia. Nor is a single reviewer always in the position to make the fitting corrections. Take, ex. gr. the Academy's edit. (Vol. vii), of *El Bastardo Mudarra*, supposedly printed from an autograph and yet full of mistakes; and then cf. Restori's review *ZfRPh.*, vol. 26 p. 502, in which he makes practically no corrections because he had at his disposal neither Ms. nor the facsimile which exists, though he was acquainted with it. (*ZfRPh.* vol. 22, p. 101).

2) Cf. his *Über die älteren Samml. Span. Dramen*, Wien 1852. There can of course be no objection to putting together certain volumes in the

(b) in that it could not claim any authority for the reading of its texts. The second group (II) of sueltas is in itself so large, that no single human being can hope to deal with it successfully¹). The comedia in this form is still so common, that hundreds can be purchased in the streets and shops of Spanish cities. In the libraries they are for the most part bound together in volumes which average fifteen to twenty sueltas each, and collections of this nature include early or late plays, as well as good or bad ones; even manuscript and printed comedias are found together. The great majority of these sueltas dates from 1700 to 1775 approximately, those from the 17th century being relatively few in number. Many of them are manifestly parts of dismembered volumes of collections, and a reconstruction of the latter would only become possible under a scheme of concerted action attempted by several persons. It is furthermore my belief that some of the sueltas of the 18th century represent a better text than the editions of the same plays found in the 17th century collections²). They may have been printed from some chance manuscript which had fallen into the hands of the editors. Many of these sueltas, however, are too worthless to deserve any careful attention.

I have spoken thus far only in a general way of the manuscripts and printed comedias with which a bibliographer will be obliged to deal. I shall now give a specific example of the difficulties that can be met with in making out an accurate record of only a single volume. Let us examine the history of the unauthorized primera parte of

sequence which their titles may indicate, but it is absurd to try to straighten out inconsistencies in the book-trade of the 17th century, or to account for the date and nature of a volume which was nothing but a bookseller's venture. I hope to deal at some future day with the history and relation of the old volumes of Comedias.

1) It is impossible to give here the number of plays which exist in the libraries of Europe, because the duplicates will have to be counted first. In the Royal Lib. of Berlin alone there are in the neighborhood of 2000 comedias. Figures in this connection always have something fabulous. Cf. Restori, *Studj di Fil. Rom.* VI, p. 7, and L. Riccoboni, *Reflex. hist. et crit. sur les diff. Théâtres de l'Europe*, Paris, 1738, p. 73; Rud. Beer in *Wiener Akad. (Phil.-hist. Cl. Vol. 120, 1893, VIII, p. 23)*. But numbers should mean nothing in the future unless they are based upon a scientific consideration of what exists.

2) Cf. the texts of *El Príncipe Don Carlos* by Diego Ximenez de Enciso, the earliest being that of 1634 (*Com. de Var. Aut. 28th part, Huesca*) and the most recent, a suelta of Valencia, 1773. See also my article on Enciso in *Pub. of the Mod. Lang. Assn of Am.* for April 1903.

Lope's collection. The most recent catalogue of his comedias¹⁾ adds some interesting items to what has gone before, but in this case also it is impossible for one person to cover the entire field and give us a critical catalogue of all editions. The consideration of too many problems is involved. At the outset, the relation of the editions is very hard to establish, since a great deal more must be known about the editors and printers. No definitive text can be established without a collation of all known issues, for some one of them may have had as a source a version unknown to the others. As regards the first part of Lope's collection, there are vouched for, mentioned or imagined in all, 24 editions. The earliest date is that conjectured by Salvá²⁾ who thought an edition of 1603, probably of Zaragoza, possible. Barrera also considered this date a likely one for a first issue at Valencia³⁾, and it seems to me very probable, that, if as early as February 1604, an *aprobacion* (prefixed to the edition of Valladolid, 1604) speaks of comedias ya impresas en Valencia, some edition of 1603 of that city may have existed. Schack believed in an issue of 1603 printed at Sevilla or Lisbon, perhaps on the strength of some of Lope's complaints⁴⁾. Menéndez Pelayo says of the edition of Valencia of 1604⁵⁾ — the date generally set down as that of this supposed wholly unknown first edition — that it was reprinted *hasta nueve veces en aquel mismo año*. As no evidence is adduced to bear out this statement, there remain three of the ten to be mentioned, one of Madrid, one of Valladolid and one of Zaragoza. The first is very rare and I have not seen a copy of it⁶⁾. That of Valladolid I saw in both the Royal Libraries of Berlin and Dresden, and Prof. Rennert has a copy on this side of the water. Ticknor considered it the first edition⁷⁾. That of Zaragoza is mentioned by Salvá as having once belonged to the library of Duran and ought therefore be in the National Library of Madrid. I have not seen it. There is no copy of it in the British Museum⁸⁾.

1) Rennert, *Life of Lope de Vega*, Glasgow 1904, p. 417f.

2) *Catal. de la bibl. de S.* Vol. I, p. 536. This conjecture may be justified further by Lope's words (in his *Epis. á Gas. de Barr.* written 1603—4) which refer to such an edition. See p. 428 of *Obras no dramat. de L. d. V. Bibl. de Aut. Esp.*

3) *Catal. del Teatro ant.* p. 438.

4) *Nachträge*, p. 40.

5) *Obras de Lope de V.* publ. p. l. Acad. VII, 1897, p. ix.

6) Mentioned by Dieze-Velazquez, *Gesch. d. Span. Dichtk.* p. 331; Schack, II, 691; Barrera, *Catal.* p. 437.

7) Ticknor-Julius, I, 597 a. 2. It is also in the *Bibl. Roy. de Belgique*.

8) Rennert, p. 424, may have followed Barrera in stating the opposite.

The next edition, that of Valencia of 1605, is not rare, and I have examined the copies which exist in the great libraries of Berlin and Munich. It is also in the British Museum. Barrera mentions an issue of Valladolid of 1605, but I can find no further details about it.

An interesting question arises in connection with the next issue dated at Antwerp, 1607. Details concerning it may be found in Barrera's catalogue, p. 437. To the Spanish bibliographer certain claims made by two distinct collectors or editors seemed inconsistent. Now the titlepage begins with: *las comedias del famoso poeta Lope de Vega Carpio. Recopiladas por Bernardo Grassa* and then adds, *agora nuevamente impressas y emendadas*, while prefixed to the plays is a dedication by the bookseller Alonso Perez to Don Antonio Ramirez de Padro. In it he says, *habiendo llegado a mis manos algunas obras de Lope de Vega y hecho election de estas doze comedias — me resolví a imprimirlas. Ahora bien: says Barrera, si Alonso Pérez fué el colector; cómo expresa el libro que las recopiló Bernardo Grassa?* Rennert¹⁾ thinks that Perez merely reprinted Grassa's edition, „title-page and all“. It seems more likely to me that one Bernardo Grassa of Valencia might independently and without difficulty have collected various comedias by Lope²⁾, especially, since the latter had resided for some time and written plays in the same city before 1603; that Grassa — and probably others also — had published a number of them in Valencia, which shortly afterwards reached Alonso Perez either at Madrid or Valladolid. The latter selected, (*hizo eleccion*) of some or all of them, and while giving credit on the title-page to the original collector, he himself claims the selection and emendation of those presented in this edition. We must remember that no one knows just what comedias the supposed issue of Valencia of 1603 or 1604 contained. The existence of a collection of identical comedias in that volume is inferred from the *aprobacion* prefixed to other editions and dated Valladolid, 17 febrero, 1604. But it merely says, *estas doze comedias ... que han sido impressas en Valencia*. And while this leads one to consider it likely that the twelve were originally printed together, Perez may have got hold of a large number *ya impressas en Valencia*, from which he actually selected these. Is

1) Life of L. de V. p. 160.

2) A prologue by Grassa, at least, is mentioned by Salvá, Catal. p. 537, but Stiefel says nothing of it, ZfRPh. vol. 15, 1891, p. 222, though he is speaking of the same edition.

there therefore a real contradiction in the claim made by Grassa that he had collected the comedias and the claim of Perez, that he had made the selection of those offered by him to the public?

But a more puzzling feature of the 1607 issue was not noticed by Barrera, and this too involves Alonso Perez, bookseller and supposedly an intimate friend in later years, of Lope de Vega. The imprint says: En Amberes; en casa de Martin Nucio, etc., año c1610vii. Who was this Martin Nucio who in 1607 simply reprints in distant Antwerp the Valladolid issue of 1604 with the same title-page and the dedication by Alonso Perez to Don Antonio Ramirez de Prado? The bookshop of the Nucio family had been founded before 1550¹⁾; sales to one Martinus Nutius of books printed by Plantin are recorded in 1555-6, and in 1565 a sale of books is made to one Philip Nutius or Nuyts, which may justify the inference that at the latter date the business was no longer in the hands of Martin Nucio. Moreover imprints of books for sale en casa de Martin Nucio are common about the middle of the 16th century²⁾, while works in Spanish issued by one Martin Nucio about 1600 are, as far as I have been able to learn, very rare, and differ greatly in character from the edition of 1607. Is it probable, therefore, that we are dealing with a bona fide issue made at Antwerp in 1607? But was it at all common or indeed likely, this issuing of comedias with a false imprint³⁾? The complaints of the times point in that direction, and on account of the laxity in enforcing the laws for the book-trade, many spurious issues are credible. Perez could easily prepare for the large demand of the home market an edition 'just arrived from the Low Countries', and even if the swindle were detected, what harm would result to anyone? What do we know, however, of Perez's reputation? All that can be said definitely of him is that he was intimate with Lope de Vega in the later years of his life. The evidence for the friendship that existed between the poet and the bookseller is somewhat vague, but inasmuch as the latter published the former's works, their connection may have been more of the nature of a business relation. Moreover it seems strange that

1) See Christophe Plantin, Imprimeur Anversois, by Max Rooses, Anvers [1882-3], pp. 18, 30, 31, 32, 35, 101; also addenda at close of article.

2) Three may serve as examples; all Amberes, En casa de Martin Nucio, (1) *La Celestina* etc., 1545; (2) Torres Naharro, *Propalladia*, 1550; (3) *Historia Ethiopica de Heliodoro* etc. (anon.) 1554. Cf. Barrera, Catal. pp. 335, 404 & Catal. of. Brit. Mus.

3) Cf. ex. gr. the prologue to Lope's *Peregrino* (1604), and that prefixed to the *Dorotea* (1632) by Lopez de Aguilar. See also Rennert, p. 423, n. 2.

Perez should at this early date, at least, have been so intimate a friend of Lope as to publish his plays from originals, and that in spite of this fact the poet should repudiate all editions prior to the 9th of his collection as unauthorized¹). Or was Perez an irresponsible bookseller seeking profits for his own purse? That he could be unscrupulous is shown in one episode which involves no less a personage than the poet Quevedo. Perez, it seems, had issued a counterfeit edition of Quevedo's *Buscon*, because its first appearance at Zaragoza (1626) had been followed by a profitable sale. Quevedo brought suit against the bookseller and won his case. All this happened in 1627²). Had that been Perez's first underhand venture? It may be that it was not; perhaps the great sale of Lope's *primera parte* induced him to try his hand at this Antwerp edition. The reasons for such an attempt could have been manifold enough. Perez may have wished to forestall the publication of the collection by another bookseller and so get the market without bearing the onus of hostile competition. He may have sold with greater profit an edition purporting to come from abroad. He may have wished to avoid antagonizing Lope by another unauthorized issue of his comedias at Madrid.

It is also to be noted that the edition of 1607 has a curious counterpart in one dated at Milan, 1619 a costa de Juan Baptista Bidelli. Both contain no *entremeses*, have the identical number of leaves which correspond page for page, and are of the same size. The differences which exist upon the title-pages and in the dedications are such as would entail only a change in the preliminary sheet of the earlier issue. It is therefore possible that this edition also is not of Italian, but of Spanish origin. The dedication, though written in Spanish by an Italian bookseller, may have given it the appearance of being genuine, and the distant Italian Bidelli probably caused the Spanish bookseller no concern³). My doubts about the last two editions are

1) Cf. n. 2, p. 6.

2) Cf. *Obras de Quevedo*, Bibl. de Aut. Esp., I, p. LXvii, n. 3, 485 n. a, II, 463 f.; Mérimée, *Essai sur la vie et les œuvres de F. de Quevedo*, Paris, 1886, p. 96, 107, 349; Ticknor-Julius, makes a misstatement on title of work printed, *Supplementband*, p. 107, a 5. If the documents of this trial could be examined, further evidence of Perez's methods might be found.

3) Both the 1607 (Antwerp) and 1619 (Milan) edit. are in the Royal Libr. at Berlin; the former is also in the great libraries of Dresden, Göttingen, Wolfenbüttel, Brit. Mus. etc., and the latter in the Royal libr. at Munich, in the Brit. Mus. and the Yale libr. Bidelli is mentioned on p. 220 of the *Dict. Géogr. d'Italie* etc., par G. Fumagalli, Florence, 1905.

strengthened by two issues of the 2nd part of Lope's collection, one bearing the imprint: en Brusselas, 1611, the other: en Amberes, 1611, both volumes being precisely alike¹), and both dedicated by Perez to the same person. The catalogue of the Brit. Museum assumes that both were printed at Antwerp. It seems to me that they were issued in Spain and that Alonso Perez could give an account of them. Their size is that of the 1607 and 1619 editions of the 1st part, all being a small 8°. This is consequently a problem to be solved only by a careful study of the editors and printers concerned, and a detailed comparison of volumes from their various presses²).

The popularity of the primera parte must have justified two editions of Valladolid in 1609³). An issue of Antwerp 1609, which Lord Holland claims to have possessed, may rest upon a misprint, as the Brit. Museum possesses no such copy, and confusion with the 1607 edition probably occasioned the misstatement. Dieze mentions an issue of Valencia of 1609⁴) because he misinterpreted the words of Nicolas Antonio. But Dieze does not appear to be reliable in matters of this kind. He adds another edition of the 1st part, of Brusselas, 1611, which he claims to have owned. But the University library of Goettingen which purchased a large number of books out of Dieze's library after his death⁵), has no such edition. It does, however, possess the 2nd part of Lope's collection, dated Brusselas, 1611, so that Dieze may simply have confused the two parts. The edition of Milan, 1617, which Schack mentions and which has been repeatedly cited after him by other bibliographers, is no doubt a misprint for 1619⁶), the edition already mentioned above. An issue of Zaragoza of 1624 is conjectured

1) Both vols. are in the Berlin libr. where I examined them. It may be asked further, why, if these suspicious vols. are genuine, are there not more issues of comedias of Antwerp or Milan, than in reality are known?

2) Cervantes hints at a cooperation among printers. Cf. Don. Q. II, cap. LXII. See also his Pers. y Sigis. IV, cap. 1, for a hit against booksellers.

3) Cf. Brit. Mus. Catal. and Salvá's Catal. p. 536; on an edit. of Valladolid of 1607, cf. Lord Holland, Account of life etc. of Lope de Vega, II, p. 140, London, 1817.

4) Dieze-Velazquez, p. 331. Antonio's words are: Valentiae prius (no date), deinde Pinciae . . . 1609, II, p. 76, Bibl. Nov.

5) The Manual of the Libr. (1836, p. 74—79) mentions the purchases. Dieze lived in Göttingen 1756—84, and died in Mainz 1785, when his excellent library was sold at auction.

6) Cf. Restori, ZfRPh. vol. 26, p. 486.

by Stiefel upon what appears an insufficient basis⁴), while a well-known edition of the same place of 1626 may have been the origin of Ticknor's and, after him, of Barrera's mention of one of 1624.

What we know with certainty of this *primera parte* is therefore seen to be relatively little, and my imperfect summary of the questions involved in a single volume of collected comedias may give an idea of the abyss of difficulties and confusions which face the bibliographer left to his own resources. Finally, an obstacle will always be found in the valuelessness of much contemporary testimony. Statements were readily made without that evidence which is indispensable today to deduce proper conclusions. It was rather an epoch for idle boasting than for self-effacement among literary men, nor was the habit of accurate statement deeply ingrained in those upon whom we must at times rely most. But coöperation among bibliographers may do much. The great drawback, that those interested in the wonderful literature of the Peninsula seldom see or hear anything of one another, is enhanced by the difficulty of keeping abreast of contributions scattered through reviews which are not in reach of all. And nothing is to be regretted more than that any valuable effort expended upon this boundless field should be overlooked and so come to nought.

4) Cf. ZfRPh. vol. 15, p. 223. The edit. of 1626 is in the Berlin libr. I have no record of its presence in the Ticknor libr. See Rennert, 424.

Addenda to p. 14: Of some 80 Span. books printed at Antwerp, of which I have a record, only 3 were issued by Martin Nucio II. It is noteworthy, moreover, that the edition of 1607 does not have the necessary Privilegio for the Low Countries. Cf. e. g. the edit. of Don Quix. pt. I, for the same year, Bruselas, 1607; that of Bruselas 1611; pt. II, Bruselas 1616, and the Novelas of Cervantes, Bruselas, 1614, all of which have Privilegios for print and sale granted by the Council of Brussels. I am indebted to the kindness of M. Max Rooses of the Musaeum Plantin-Moretus at Antwerp for further information regarding the Nutius or Nuyts family. The gist of it will be found in the Biographie Nat. de Belgique, XVI, 1^{er} fasc. p. 11 ff. Brux. 1900.
